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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted during fall semester 1981 and spring semester 1982 at Parkland College, a 2-year community college in Champaign, Illinois, to determine the influence of a book display on circulation in an academic library. The study was based on previous experiments conducted by Herbert Goldhor in public libraries. A group of 100 books was randomly selected from the existing library collection and 50 books were prominently displayed during each of the two experimental periods. Circulation records were kept for the 100 books before, during, and after the experimental periods. Telephone and mail questionnaires were also administered to 47 borrowers to determine why they borrowed the books selected for the study. Results indicated that books prominently displayed in academic libraries will circulate at a significantly higher rate than books kept in their regular shelf positions regardless of their number of previous circulations, year of publication, number of pages or illustrations, physical condition, presence or absence of book jackets, type of binding or their frequency of listing in various selection tools. Questionnaire results also showed that books on display were borrowed for that reason, while books in the stacks were borrowed because of class assignments. (ESR)

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The Influence of a Book Display on Circulation in a Two-Year College Library

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this experiment is to determine the influence of a book display on circulation in an academic library. This study is based on the experiments conducted by Goldhor, and to some extent it is a replication of those studies. A fundamental difference is that Goldhor examined the effects of a book display in public libraries whereas the present study examines the effects in an academic library. It is hypothesized that books which are prominently displayed will have a significantly higher rate of circulation because any device which facilitates browsing will result in increased circulation.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the study

Herbert Goldhor has completed two investigations in which he examined the effects of a prominently located book display on circulation in public libraries. The thesis of his 1970 study of the Champaign and Urbana public libraries was that "Public library circulation...will vary directly with each aspect or combination of aspects which induce or encourage browsing." Goldhor found that adult patrons selected books more often when they were in a prime display than when they were in their regular locations on the library shelves.[1]

In 1978/79 Goldhor made a similar study in the Kingston and St. Andrew Parish Library in Jamaica. His revised hypothesis stated that,

> "Whatever serves to guide adult public library readers to a reasonably small collection of ostensibly interesting and worthwhile books will result in a significant increase in the circulation of those books; whatever inhibits such guidance will result in a significant decline in the circulation of the books in question; and whatever has no connection with or influence on the guidance of readers will have no appreciable effect on the circulation of the relevant books. The presumed reason for this relationship is that most adult users of the public library have no specific title or class of books in mind when they come to the library, and they need, welcome, and will use any device or technique which is offered or available to them by which they can identify, quickly and easily, a reasonably small group of books which they assume or believe will be of interest to them."[2]

In his study Auld prepared a theoretical model which incorporated age of materials, and personalization of the advertising medium. His

thesis was that newer books were more likely to be borrowed than older books, that a high level of advertising would yield greater results than low level advertising, and that a recommendation from a friend would have a greater influence on circulation than a message transmitted via public television. In referring to Goldhor's experiment Auld astutely points out that the causal element may well be the principle of least effort.[3] In other words, patrons borrow from a prominent display because it is easier to select from a small group than to select from the collection as a whole.

The purpose of the present study is to determine the influence of a book display, using low level advertising, on circulation in an academic library. It is hypothesized that books which are prominently displayed will have a significantly higher rate of circulation because any device which facilitates browsing will result in increased circulation.

Background

This present study is based on the experiments conducted by Goldhor, and to some extent it is a replication of these studies. A fundamental difference is that Goldhor examined the effects of a book display in public libraries whereas the present study examines the effects in an academic library.

During the fall of 1981 and the spring of 1982, the study was conducted at Parkland College. Parkland is a two-year community college located in Champaign, Illinois. The Library is centrally located, and as of June, 1981 the collection contained 73,749 volumes with an annual circulation of 70,199.

In the fall 1981 semester Parkland had a headcount enrollment of 8,564 (3,060 full-time, and 5,504 part-time students). The enrollment reflected 2,875 freshmen, 749 sophomores, and 4,940 unclassified or undeclared students; 3,582 were men and 4,982 were women.[4] Further analysis of the student body, course offerings, faculty and staff, etc., was deemed to be outside the scope of this study.

METHODOLOGY

Overview of the Methodology

Using an experimental methodology this study was partitioned into two experimental periods; the first period consisted of selecting randomly one hundred books from the circulating collection, and dividing them randomly into two groups of fifty each. The control group, Group A, contained the books which were kept on the shelves in their regular locations, and the experimental group, Group B, contained the books which were placed in a prominent display. The display was located on a table near the entrance of the Library with a small sign (12" X 14") which read, "GREAT BOOKS ( ) CHECK THEM OUT!"

The second experimental period involved a reversal of the two groups. Specifically, the control group was placed on display, while the experimental group was returned to its regular shelf position.

In this study the pre-experimental period was scheduled from August 1--September 30, 1981 (classes at Parkland for fall begun on August 31); the first experimental period ran from October 1--December 1, 1981; the post-experimental period was conducted from December 2,

1981--February 28, 1982, and the second experimental period was from March 1—May 1, 1982.

In the light of Hermenze's recent article, it is evident that it is quite a difficult task to isolate the reason(s) why library users borrow books selected from a prominent display.[5] The evidence, suggesting that display books in academic libraries are borrowed primarily because they are displayed, is at this point not conclusive. For this study eleven variables which could influence borrowing were isolated and analyzed to determine their effect on circulation. The variables included, (1) Total number of circulation prior to the study; (2) Year of publication; (3) Original publication date; (4) Number of pages; (5) Number of illustrations; (6) Physical condition of the book; (7) Presence of a book jacket; (8) Rebinding; (9) Perma-bound;(10) Paperback, and (11) Frequency of Reviews.

For purposes of this study a variable was not considered pragmatically significant unless it was statistically significant at the five percent level during both experimental periods. Two major reasons account for this: First, common sense suggests that any variable which is truly significant should invariably express such significance. Second, as a result of the large number of variables examined it is quite possible that a given variable may exhibit a tendenacy toward significance as a result of chance alone. In other words, if one examines enough variables one of those variables is bound to indicate statistical signficance at a high level.

During the two experimental periods of the study, circulation tallies were kept for Groups A and B; and when a book was borrowed.

the investigator telephoned the individual user and a brief oral questionnaire was administered.

To determine the number of circulations during the pre-experimental period, it was necessary to examine each of the 100 book cards to determine whether or not the books had been borrowed during this period. Due to the time limitations this procedure was necessary in order to limit the study to the 1981/82 academic year.

Sampling Procdedure

Unlike the second Goldhor study which dealt with a specific section of a given collection (i.e., biographies), it was determined that this study would derive its sample from the entire circulating collection, thereby allowing application of the findings to the collection as a whole. Non-circulating reference books, reserve books, and bound journals were excluded, and unfortunately, it was also necessary to omit those books which were currently in circulation at the time the sample was being collected.

The Library contained 516 shelving units, defined as those sections of horizontal shelves located between two vertical supports, most of which consisted of seven shelves for standard size materials and five shelves for oversized material. One sample book was drawn from every other shelving unit for a total gross sample of 258 titles. Shelflist cards were examined for all but four books (three shelflist cards could not be located and one book was needed by a user prior to the beginning of the study). In addition, twenty titles were deleted as a result of the decision to simplify the study by limiting it to single copy titles. It should be noted, however, that less than eight percent of the gross sample represented multiple copies.

A numbered list was then made of the remaining 234 books, and using a table of random numbers, a sample of 100 books was selected. The final step in the selection process was that of dividing the sample into the control and experimental groups. For this process the book cards from the 100 books were literally shuffled (face down) and dealt into two groups of fifty with one group arbitrarily designated as Group A and the other as Group B.

In order to distinguish the one hundred sample books from all the other books in the Library collection, a blue dot was affixed to the book cards of the sample books. At the end of each day a circulation clerk would identify via the blue dot those sample books which had been borrowed. The book's call number and user identification number were transferred onto a form and forwarded to the investigator. A blue dot was also affixed onto the spine of the experimental books as a reminder to the shelvers that the books were to be returned to the display.

Parkland College maintains an online file of students; the file provides name, address, phone number, sex, status, and a wealth of other information. A similar directory of faculty and staff provides name, address, and phone number. In both instances access is by user identification number.

Two or three weeks after users borrowed books from the sample, the investigator administered a telephone questionnaire. This delay allowed users time to read the books(s) before they were contacted.

ANALYSIS

Analysis of the Sample

As stated earlier, eleven variables were examined and analyzed to determine if they had any influence on circulation. The procedures used in analyzing each of these variables are described below:

1. Total Number of Circulation Prior to the Study:

The total number of circulations prior to the study was determined by analyzing the book cards. Parkland uses a Gaylord charging mechanism (Model C) which manually records the user's identification number and due date onto each book card. In instances where a book had been transferred to a reserve shelf the word "reserve" was noted on the book card. The transferral of a book from the regular shelves to the reserve shelf was treated as one circulation, since it was impossible to determine the number of in-house circulations made while the volume was on reserve. It was possible to determine that in no instance had a new book card been produced to replace a lost original book card. This was possible since "duplicate" is typed on the card when a duplicate card is made. Furthermore, it was subjectively determined, with the assistance of the staff, that in no instance had a book card required replacement as a result of being "filled-up." The number of circulations ranged from zero to twenty-eight, with a mean of 2.9.

2. Year of Publication:

The purpose of this category was to ascertain the degree of correlation between recency of the material and

circulation. Experience has shown, however, that a distinction exists between recency of publication and recency of acquisition. As such, an attempt was made to determine the date of acquisition, but unfortunately, this information was not readily available since procedural changes which have occurred throughout the years make this information difficult to attain and interpret.

The year of publication for ninety-eight books ranged from 1940 through 1981, with the mean publication date being 1969. In the remaining two cases no publication date was given.

3. Original Publication Date:

The years of the original publication date ranged from 1900 through 1981 and in one instance the original year of publication was not provided. The mean date for the original year of publication was 1963.

4. Number of Pages:

The length of the books ranged from 49 to 1,977 pages, with a mean of 342 pages.

5. Number of Illustrations:

An illustration was defined to include photographs, charts, maps, diagrams, drawings, and tables. The number of illustrations was divided into four categories: (1) No illustrations; (2) One--three illustrations, (3) Four--six illustrations, and (4) Seven or more illustrations. Sixty-four percent had no illustrations, two percent had between one--three illustrations, none of the books had four--six illustrations, and thirty-four percent had seven or more.

6. Physical Condition:

Evaluating the physical condition of the book was quite obviously a subjective interpretation by the investigator, resulting in the decision that 97 percent of the books were in good condition, 2 percent in fair condition, and 1 percent in poor condition. As a result of the sample's uniformity, further analysis which attempts to examine the effects of physical condition on circulation is useless. Given that the majority of the books are in excellent condition the analysis would be meaningless, and nothing would be gained.

7. Book Jacket:

Fifty-six percent of the one hundred sample books had book jackets.

8. Rebinding:

Of the books in the sample none had been rebound. Again, the complete homogeneity of this variable precludes further analysis.

9. Perma-Bound:

Perma-binding refers to the process of replacing a soft covered book with a hard cover. This is normally accomplished by removing the old cover and laminating it onto a stiff piece of cardboard and then gluing the pieces back into position. Of the sample books sixteen percent had undergone perma-binding. Parkland purchases books which are already perma-bound rather than sending them to a bindery at a later time, so perma-bound books were not considered to be rebound.

10. Paperback:

Five percent of the one hundred sample books were paperback. The overwhelming consistency of this variable prevents further analysis.

11. Frequency of Reviews:

The quality factor, needless to say, was quite difficult to gauge. Rather than relying on the investigator's subjective evaluation as to the quality of a book, it was determined to use Goldhor's "inductive" technique. Fundamentally, this technique consists of taking a sample of titles in a library's collection and searching them in each of several selection tools. In using the inductive methodology, listings of the sample books were searched in four book selection tools, one retrospective bibliography, and four reviewing journals. Titles found in the majority of these tools can be labelled as desirable; those found only in a couple of sources may be labelled as marginally desirable, while those not listed in any of the tools may be labelled as undesirble.[6] The only factor considered in determining content quality was whether or not a book was listed or reviewed; the distinction between positive and negative reviews was outside the scope of the study.

The following selection tools were used:

Current

Junior College Library Collection, 1970 ed.

Books for College Libraries, 2nd ed.

Senior High School Library Catalog, 11th ed., and subsequent issues.

Public Library Catalog, 7th ed., and subsequent issues.

Retrospective

Reader's Advisor; A Layman's Guide to Literature, 12th ed.

Review Journals

Choice.

Booklist.

Library Journal.

New York Times Literary Supplement.

The total number of titles found in these sources is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

FREQUENCY OF LISTING IN SELECTION TOOLS

Tool	Control Group (N=50)	Experimental Group (N=50)	Total (N=100)	Level of Significant Difference
Book Selection				
Junior College Lib. Collection	7	11	18	
Books for College Libraries	7	12	19	
Senior High School Catalog	1	2	3	
Public Library Catalog	8	6	14	
Total Listing (Mean)	3.54	3.38	--	.29
Retrospective Bibliography				
Reader's Advisor	5	7	12	
Total Listing (Mean)	.90	.86	--	.54
Book Reviewing Journals				
Choice	13	17	30	
Booklist	5	8	13	
Library Journal	18	20	38	
N.Y. Times Book Review	8	3	11	
Total Listing (Mean)	3.12	3.04	--	.71

NOTE: It may be necessary to refer to page 13 for interpretation of the coding scheme.

Coding Scheme

In order to interpret the findings as shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3 it will be necessary to understand the coding scheme used in the study. The first four variables, "Total No. of Circs. Prior to the Study, Year of Publication, Original Year of Publication, and Number of Pages," are not in code form and the figures are to be read as shown. The remaining variables are coded and should be interpreted as follows:

Number of Illustrations:	(0) = No illustrations (1) = 1—3 illustrations (2) = 4--6 illustrations (3) = 7 or more illustrations
Physical Condition:	(1) = Good (2) = Fair (3) = Poor
Listing in Tools:	(1) = Yes listed (2) = No Not listed *(3) = Yes listed *(4) = No Not listed *(7) = Yes listed *(8) = No Not listed
All Other Variables	(1) = Yes (e.g. a book jacket was present) (2) = No (e.g. the book not listed in Choice)

*Represents totals

Comparison of Control and Experimental Groups

The purpose of comparing the control and experimental groups was to determine if they were fundamentally equivalent, and if not, what the differences were. As shown in Table 2 only the variable concerning the presence of book jackets indicated a difference between the two groups. A frequency count revealed that twenty-three of the

books in the control group had book jackets as compared to thirty-three of the experimental group. None of the other variables listed in Table 2 indicated a difference between Groups A and B at a statistically significant level. Briefly stated, Groups A and B were essentially identical.

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF CONTROL & EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

Variable	Control Group Mean (N=50)	Experimental Group Mean (N=50)	Level of Significant Difference
Total No. of Circs. Prior to the Study	2.94	2.94	1.00
Year of Publication	1968.76	1969.17	.80
Original Year of Pub.	1964.10	1961.67	.45
Number of Pages	310.60	373.68	.31
Number of Illustrations	1.16	.92	.40
Book Jacket	1.54	1.34	.04
Perma Binding	1.90	1.78	.10
Listing in Tools	7.56	7.28	.31

NOTE: The findings for the first four variables should be read as shown; however, the last four variables are coded and it may be necessary to refer to page 13 for interpretation of the coding scheme.

FINDINGS--PRE & FIRST EXPERIMENTAL PERIODS

In this study the findings and conclusions are based on the total number of circulations rather than the number of titles which circulated. It was possible to analyze the data considering only

those titles which circulated; the net results were the same in every instance.

Comparisons of the pre-experimental period with the first experimental period reflected an increase in circulation for both groups. During the pre-experimental period, only one book circulated from Group A and two from Group B. During the first experimental period, five circulations occurred from Group A and twenty-one from Group B, reflecting increases which translated into ratios of 5:1 and 10.5:1 respectively. The increases for Group B were more than twice as high as for Group A. These numbers, however, are such low figures to begin with that they must be viewed cautiously since an additional borrowing in either group would have had a dramatic influence on the resulting ratios. Nevertheless, the pre-experimental statistics will be used to determine whether or not the experimental books returned to their normal level of circulation once they were removed from the display.

Succinctly stated, the first experimental period indicated that there is a direct positive correlation between displaying books and circulation in an academic library. The findings showed that Group B did, in fact, circulate at a higher rate during the experimental period than Group A. The frequencies of circulation of Group B indicated that nineteen titles circulated, two of which circulated twice to different users, and one which was renewed but treated as one circulation. Four books from Group A circulated with one book being borrowed twice by different users. In terms of absolute borrowings, this translated into twenty-one circulations from Group B as compared to five from Group A, a ratio of 4.2:1. A t-test shows that the

higher circulation of the experimental group is statistically significant at the .00 level.

FINDINGS--POST EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD

At the conclusion of the first experimental period the experimental books were returned to their regular location on the shelves. The circulation of all one hundred books continued to be monitored in order to determine if their circulation rate would return to normal. It should be remembered that during the pre-experimental period only one book circulated from Group A and two from Group B. During the post-experimental period only one book was borrowed from each group. This indicated that the experimental books quickly returned to their low level of circulation when removed from the prominent display.

FINDINGS--SECOND EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD

As mentioned earlier, the second experimental period consisted of a reversal of the experimental and control groups. The experimental books of the first period were left in their regular shelf position following the post-experimental period, thus becoming the control group. On the other hand, the control group books of the first experimental period were placed on display and became the experimental group. The same display area and sign were used, and the second experimental period ran from March 1--May 1, 1982.

The results for the most part were similar to those of the first experimental period. The frequencies of circulation of the new

experimental group indicated that seventeen books circulated, five of which were borrowed twice by different users, as compared to five borrowings from the control group. In terms of absolute borrowings this translates into five circulations from Group A and twenty-two from Group B, a ratio of 4.4:1. The higher rate of circulation for Group B was found to be statistically significant at the .00 level, more than could be accounted for by chance alone.

COMPARISON OF FIRST & SECOND EXPERIMENTAL PERIODS

T-tests were also conducted to determine if any of the variables could account for the increased circulation of the experimental books over the control books during both experimental periods. The findings as shown in Table 3 indicate that none of the variables proved to be statistically significant during both periods.

Nevertheless, closer examination of the results of the first period suggest that two variables displayed a tendency toward significance. The variable "Total No. of Circs. Prior to the Study" proved to be statistically significant (as shown in Table 3, the mean for Group A was three times higher than the mean of Group B). Although the finding is mathematically significant it nonetheless indicates that those books in Group A which had a history of high circulation continued to be borrowed during the experimental period, while books which were in the display circulated even though they did not have a history of high circulation. As such, this is a significance which reflects quite positively on the effectiveness of a book display.

The "Book Jacket" variable also correlated very highly with circulation. In terms of absolute frequencies the means of the first experimental period signified that none of the five control books which circulated had a book jacket as compared to sixteen of the twenty-one experimental books. It should be remembered, however, that at a statistically significant level, Group B had more books with book jackets than Group A (refer to Table 1), and consequently, the validity of this correlation is questionable. Furthermore, the results of the second experimental period indicated no significant difference between the circulation of those books with jackets and those without jackets.

Although not shown in this report, t-tests were also conducted on all variables to determine if there was any significant difference between those books which circulated from the experimental groups and those which did not. In short, no statistical difference was found.

It should also be pointed out that in this study a drop-off in the rate of circulation did not occur. Goldhor, however, found that the rate of circulation dropped off significantly after a three month period.[7] Whether or not that drop-off would occur in an academic library remains to be seen. This points to the need of additional studies which would answer the question "What is the optimum time length for a book display?"

Also yet to be established is the size of the optimum book display. This could be measured by the number of volumes in the display or by the physical size (i.e. fifty square feet).

The final comparison made between the two experimental periods pertained to borrowers; it was found that of the forty-seven

TABLE 3

COMPARISON OF BOOKS WHICH CIRCULATED

Variables	First Experimental Period: Control Group Mean (N=5)	First Experimental Period: Exp. Group Mean (N=21)	First Experimental Period: Level of Significant Difference	Second Experimental Period: Control Group Mean (N=5)	Second Experimental Period: Exp. Group Mean (N=22)	Second Experimental Period: Level of Significant Difference
Total No. of Circs Prior to the Study	9.60	3.00	.05	2.80	3.41	.76
Year of Publication	1976.60	1970.67	.14	1966.60	1966.41	.97
Original Year of Pub.	1973.00	1970.33	.52	1956.60	1963.73	.28
Number of Pages	355.20	408.81	.81	260.60	297.14	.77
Number of Illustrations	1.20	.91	.68	.60	1.27	.36
Book Jacket	2.00	1.24	.00	1.60	1.46	.57
Perma Binding	2.00	1.81	.31	1.80	1.82	.93
Listing in Tools	8.20	6.86	.07	6.80	7.50	.40

NOTE: The findings for the first four variables should be read as shown; however, the last seven variables are coded and it may be necessary to refer to page 12 for interpretation of the coding scheme.

individual borrowers only two borrowed books from the total sample during both experimental periods.

Questionnaire Results

The primary purposes of the questionnaire were to determine why the book was borrowed, the status of the borrower, and whether or not the book had been read. As stated earlier, every time a sample book was borrowed, an attempt was made to reach the user and to administer a brief questionnaire. The user was contacted sometime between the second and third week after the book had been borrowed.

For the twenty-six circulations which occurred during the first experimental period, twenty-one questionnaires were completed for a questionnaire return rate of 81 percent. Twenty-two users accounted for the twenty-six borrowings and of them eighteen were contacted, a user response rate of 82 percent.

Of the twenty-seven circulations which occurred during the second experimental period, twenty questionnaires were completed for a questionnaire response rate of 74 percent. Twenty-five users accounted for the borrowings, eighteen were contacted for a 72 percent user response. The major distinction between the two questionnaire gathering procedures involved the use of the mail in the second period. As is typical of most students, Parkland College students apparently do not remain in town when classes are over; it was therefore necessary to mail the questionnaire to the student's permanent home address, and this may in part account for the lower response rate.

The questionnaire results are shown in Tables 4-6; as can be seen the results from both periods are remarkably simil . Table 4 shows that very few individuals borrowed more than one book. This indicates that a small number of users did not account for the bulk of the borrowings, thereby biasing the results.

TABLE 4

NUMBER OF BOOKS BORROWED BY INDIVIDUAL USERS

Number of Books Borrowed	First Experimental Period Number of Users	First Experimental Period Total No. of Circs.	Second Experimental Period Number of Users	Second Experimental Period Total No. of Circs
1	19	19	23	23
2	2	4	2	4
3	1	3	--	--
Totals	22	26	25	27

The influence of the display as described by the users is outlined in Table 5. The overwhelming reason the users gave for borrowing books from the experimental groups was, "It was on display and looked interesting." Only in one instance was a book borrowed from the experimental groups for classroom related use; however, even in that instance the user indicated that the book was brought to his attention by the display. As might be expected, the books which circulated from the control groups were directly related to students' class work.

Since the process of borrowing and reading a book are quite distinct, each user was asked whether all or part of the book had been read. It was not surprising to find that the books borrowed from the experimental groups were fully read, especially since the titles were borrowed because of personal interest to the user, and not for class use which may or may not be of personal interest. It is evident, however, that it was the display which brought the books to their attention.

TABLE 5

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE

Question	First Experimental Period			Second Experimental Period		
	Control Group	Exp. Group	Total	Control Group	Exp. Group	Total
Why Borrowed?						
Relates to Classroom	4/100	1/06	5/24	2/67	0/0	2/10
Looked Interesting	0/0	15/88	15/71	1/33	16/94	17/85
Other	0/0	1/06	1/05	0/0	1/06	1/05
Total	4/100	17/100	21/100	3/100	17/100	20/100
Amount Read?						
100%	0/0	6/35	6/29	0/0	2/12	2/10
50—00%	1/25	3/18	4/19	2/67	6/35	8/40
1—49%	2/50	5/29	7/33	0/0	8/47	8/40
None	1/25	3/18	4/19	1/33	1/06	2/10
Total	4/100	17/100	21/100	3/100	17/100	20/100

NOTE: The number before the slash (/) indicates frequency of response; the number following the slash shows percentage of the totals.

Table 6 indicates that there were no major demographic differences in either experimental periods. Nevertheless, it was not surprising to find that although sophomores represented only nine percent of the enrollment, they accounted for a disproportinate number of borrowings, this was especially true during the first experimental period. This disparity may be partially explained by the fact that not all students may have been classified at the time the study was conducted.

TABLE 6

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF USERS

Category	First Experimental Period		Second Experimental Period	
	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group
College Status				
Freshman	3/75	4/29	1/33	7/47
Sophomore	1/25	6/43	1/33	3/20
Graduate	0/0	2/14	0/0	1/07
Faculty	0/0	1/07	1/33	1/07
Staff	0/0	1/07	0/0	1/07
Other	0/0	0/0	0/0	2/13
Total	4/100	14/100	3/99	15/101
Sex				
Male	1/25	6/43	0/0	11/65
Female	3/75	8/57	3/100	6/35
Total	4/100	14/100	3/100	17/100

NOTE: Number prior to the slash (/) indicates frequency; number following the slash shows percentage of total. Totals not equalling 100% are a result of rounding.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has attempted to determine what influence a prominent book display has on circulation in an academic library. By using the experimental method, one hundred books were selected randomly from the collection and their circulation was computed during a pre-experimental period. The books were than divided into two groups of fifty each; Group A, the control group, was kept in its regular shelf position while Group B, the experimental group, was placed on a prominent display.

At the end of a two month experimental period, all books were returned to their regular shelf positions and circulation continued to be monitored in an effort to determine if the rate of circulation for the experimental group would return to normal once they were removed from display.

During the second experimental period the groups of books were reversed and circulation was again monitored. In both experimental periods, borrowers were contacted in an effort to ascertain why the books were borrowed, the status of the borrower, and whether or not the book had been read.

The results of the study indicate that there is a strong correlation between displaying books and circulation. Mathematically this correlation was significant at the .00 level for the first experimental period and at the .00 level for the second period.

In addition, eleven variables were identified and a t-test was conducted for each variable in order to determine if that variable could account for the increased circulation. The results of the first experimental period suggested that the presence of a book jacket could account for the increased circulation; however, when the control and experimental groups were reversed and the variables were tested again, each of the variables failed the test of statistical significant difference at the five percent level.

T-tests conducted also show that there was no statistical difference between those books which circulated from the experimental groups and those which did not.

It is possible that other variables which were not tested may account for the increased circulation of the display books; nevertheless, this study has shown that books which are prominently displayed in an academic library will circulate at a significantly higher rate than books which are kept in their regular shelf positions regardless of their number of previous circulations, year of publication, original year of publication, number of pages, number of illustrations, physical condition, presence or absence of book jackets, whether or not the book has been rebound, perma-bound, or is a paperback, and the frequency of listing in various selection tools.

Like Goldhor's studies, this experiment has demonstrated that under controlled conditions, books prominently displayed will circulate at a higher rate than when left on the shelves. Nevertheless, this does not answer the question of why this phenomenon occurs. As mentioned earlier, Auld suggests that it is a principle of least effort; Goldhor initially hypothesized that any device which facilitated browsing

would lead to increased circulation, however, this was modified to suggest that whatever serves to guide adult readers will increase circulation. Yet one more explanation is offered here; marketing experts have long known that items which are prominently displayed (e.g. a rack adjacent to a check-out counter at a supermarket) will readily catch the buyer's attention and increase the likelihood of an item being purchased. In the grocery industry these display areas are valuable pieces of real estate and are known as the "front end." The typical front end tenants include confectionary products, cigarettes, film, publications, etc. Perhaps this same concept is at work in libraries, books which are displayed gain greater exposure and accessibility thereby increasing their circulation, nothing more and nothing less. As a librarian one would like to think that Goldhor is correct--that users are seeking our guidance and direction. If, however, they are not, and are borrowing as a result of impulse, academic librarians are being given an ample opportunity to guide the reading or at least the borrowings of their users via displays.

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